



The Bigger Picture

Last year was very much a year of consolidation and subtle change – at least for many parts of the UK economy, and indeed for many at an individual level. Trends such as “on-shoring” – or the reverse of “off-shoring” - started to bear fruit. Many “low cost” economies had begun to lose their pricing advantage in manufacturing. As an example, labour rates in industrial parts of China post Covid were beginning to chase those of USA. Furthermore, increasing transport costs from far flung places were allowing home grown industry to compete more robustly.

Now, almost everything that is manufactured or is a “processed” product, for example foodstuffs, has some materials that are supplied and used in bulk solids form, which is where SHAPA plays its part in this thankfully improving situation. Indeed, the Solids Handling & Processing Association was initially set up to help like minded companies share knowledge and increase their sales and marketing effort. For more than forty years a wealth of knowledge and experience has been accumulating within the Association, offering technical standards and legislation data as well as sound commercial and marketing advice. Of course, all of this vital material is updated as and when new intelligence comes along.

Collective expertise

Clearly no single person or organisation can be expert at everything, but within the manufacture and use of solids handling equipment a vast range of expertise is needed. SHAPA offers valuable resources to enable all members to widen their knowledge and experience. Within any major processing enterprise, the supplier of each element of the flow process system will be both a supplier and a receiver – or “customer”. Each supplier will need to know the characteristics, mass and volume flow of the material delivered to their part of the equipment. Similarly, they will need to pass on appropriate data about the discharge of their product to the next part of the plant. Such communication is essential. Coincidentally, many SHAPA member companies are either suppliers to or customers of each other, often within the same project.



Communicating for success

This is just one facet of the SHAPA community that leads to profitable networking between members at the regular Association general meetings. In fact, the high level of attendance at these gatherings is almost unique amongst engineering trade associations.

By their own enthusiasm and efforts individual members have willingly contributed to the success of SHAPA, secure in the knowledge that this application will help their own companies as well as other members and little by little improve the quality and reliability of all projects offered to end user clients.

It has long been said that solids handling and processing was originally a “black art” – maybe this was true in the misty past. But not now. The cooperative work of technical research institutions and associations such as SHAPA, through the commitment of skilled engineers and other professionals has ensured that knowledge based progress has prevailed.

Commitment to the future

So, SHAPA may well have celebrated more than forty years’ valuable service to our industries, but our keen members will ensure that the future is assured and therefore any company involved in the supply of solids handling equipment and services should really consider membership. Clearly, we thank those companies who have joined us over the years – today’s membership stands at over 100 companies! They have already tapped into these benefits. Vitally, however, companies and consultants involved with new projects or updating existing process plant should head first for the Equipment Finder on our website – just a click or two away at www.shapa.co.uk, or send an email to info@shapa.co.uk.